United Nations S/2015/211

Security Council

Distr.: General
25 March 2015
English
Original: French

Letter dated 25 March 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the eighteenth monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 February to 22 March 2015.

The destruction of the 12 remaining chemical weapons production facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic has continued. OPCW has now confirmed that the third underground structure has been destroyed, and the destruction of the fourth should be completed shortly.

With regard to the Syrian Arab Republic's initial declaration and subsequent amendments, OPCW technical experts continue their dialogue with the Syrian authorities. The OPCW Declaration Assessment Team is currently undertaking its eighth visit to the Syrian Arab Republic in order to clarify outstanding issues and consult further with the Syrian authorities. In view of the importance of that work, I call upon the Syrian authorities to continue to extend all necessary cooperation to OPCW.

The work of the fact-finding mission that is looking into allegations of the use of toxic chemicals as weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is ongoing. As the Security Council knows, I take the allegations very seriously. I strongly condemn any use of such materials by any party to the conflict, and once again call for the perpetrators of any such acts to be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex urgently to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

15-04803 (E) 260315 260315

Please recycle

Annex

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 of the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council. My report covers the period from 23 February to 22 March 2015 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

Enclosure

Note by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

Progress in the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") reports to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General. This is the eighteenth such monthly report.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, also adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015).

4. This report is therefore submitted in accordance with the above-mentioned Council decisions. It includes information relevant to their implementation during the period from 23 February to 22 March 2015.

Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress achieved within the current reporting period by the Syrian Arab Republic in fulfilling its obligations as per decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1 is described below:

   (a) With respect to the destruction and verification of the 12 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) (seven aircraft hangars and five underground structures) in the Syrian Arab Republic as per Council decision EC-M-43/DEC.1 (dated 24 July 2014), three underground structures have been verified by the OPCW as destroyed, and destruction operations continue at one of the remaining two underground structures. It is expected that the destruction of all five underground structures will have been completed before June 2015. Regarding the destruction of the aircraft hangars, the removal of soil and of the large hangar doors is complete at five sites, as previously reported. Drilling to accommodate the explosive charges is complete at one hangar, and its destruction is to occur before the end of March 2015, subject to the timely delivery of the explosives. The drilling activities at the second site are expected to begin

soon. Currently, one underground structure and two hangars are not accessible owing to the security situation near these sites.

(b) On 18 March 2015, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its sixteenth monthly report (EC-79/P/NAT.1, dated 18 March 2015) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its chemical weapons and CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC-M-34/DEC.1.

(c) The Syrian authorities have continued to extend the necessary cooperation in accordance with the implementation of subparagraph 1(e) of EC-M-33/DEC.1 and paragraph 7 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013).

Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities

6. As reported previously, all declared chemicals have been removed from the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic, and all declared stocks of the Category 1 chemicals have been destroyed. As at the cut-off date of this report, 91.9% of the Category 2 chemicals had already been destroyed, representing a combined total of 98%, including the isopropanol previously destroyed in the Syrian Arab Republic. The status of the destruction of the remaining Category 2 chemical and effluents at commercial facilities selected pursuant to paragraph 24 of EC-M-34/DEC.1, and at facilities sponsored by States Parties pursuant to paragraph 7 of decision EC-M-36/DEC.2 (dated 17 December 2013), is as follows:

(a) A total of 34% of the only remaining Category 2 chemical (hydrogen fluoride (HF)) had already been destroyed at Veolia ES Technical Solutions, LLC in the United States of America and at Mexichem UK Limited in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. While operations have recently resumed at Mexichem, the destruction of the remaining chemical at Veolia ES is currently on hold pending the resolution of technical issues.

(b) A total of 67.5% of the DF effluent and 93.8% of the HD effluent produced by the neutralisation process on board the United States Vessel MV Cape Ray has been destroyed by Ekokem in Finland and at the GEKA facility in Germany, respectively.

7. The Secretariat will continue to provide information on the aforementioned destruction activities during briefings to States Parties in The Hague and through the monthly reports. Timelines for the completion of the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons were provided in the overall report on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme (paragraph 25 of EC-76/DG.16, dated 4 July 2014), which was noted by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session. While the Secretariat is not able to give a forecast at this stage about the completion of the destruction of the remaining chemical in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, estimates for Germany and Finland remain the end of March and the end of June 2015, respectively.

Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic

8. Cooperation with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has continued in the context of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. As at the cut-off date of this report, 12 OPCW staff members were deployed as part of that Mission. The Special Adviser to the Director-General on Syria, Ambassador José Artur Denot Medeiros of Brazil, arrived in Damascus on 21 March 2015 to continue his meetings with senior Syrian officials, UNOPS staff, and the United Nations Designated Official in Syria.

9. The Director-General has continued to meet with senior representatives of the States Parties hosting a destruction facility or otherwise providing assistance with the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons. He also communicated regularly with senior officials from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. As requested by the Council at its Seventy-Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat has continued to provide regular information briefings to States Parties in The Hague on behalf of the Director-General.

10. As stipulated by the Council at its Seventy-Sixth Session (paragraph 6.17 of EC-76/6, dated 11 July 2014), the Secretariat and the Syrian authorities continue to cooperate on outstanding issues regarding the Syrian initial declaration. The Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) has thus far made seven visits to the Syrian Arab Republic, and a number of issues from the initial assessment of the Syrian declaration have been clarified. These are detailed in the Note by the Secretariat entitled "Third Status Report of the Activities of the Declaration Assessment Team" (EC-78/P/S/1, dated 4 March 2015), which was noted by the Council at its Seventy-Eighth Session. The Secretariat also gave a presentation to States Parties in this regard.

11. The analytical results of the samples taken during the DAT's visits to the Syrian Arab Republic in December 2014 and January 2015 were received by the OPCW from the two designated laboratories on 3 and 4 March 2015. The summary of the results was provided to the Syrian Arab Republic on 10 March 2015 and States Parties were briefed. The issue will also need to be discussed with the Syrian National Authority, together with the analytical results of the samples taken previously at the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre.

12. The DAT will continue its technical consultations and its interviews with key principals from the Syrian chemical weapons programme, and undertake possible additional site visits involving sampling and analysis. The team's current visit is taking place between 22 March and 3 April 2015.

13. As reported previously, the implementation of additional special monitoring measures, as mentioned in Note EC-M-43/DG.1/Rev.1 (dated 21 July 2014), includes the use of a vault monitoring system. Fibre-optic cables have already been installed and successfully tested in three interior plugs at three underground structures, and the construction of the base monitoring stations for these structures has been verified as complete at one site. The installation of cables and construction of the base stations for the other two structures is nearing completion. Training for the operators on the installation, operation, and maintenance of the special monitoring system is scheduled to be provided by Aquila Technologies at the OPCW Headquarters in The Hague from

20 April to 1 May 2015. At that time, Aquila Technologies will deliver to the OPCW the first set of the special monitoring system equipment to be installed in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Supplementary resources

14. The total contributions of EUR 50.3 million in the Syria Trust Fund for the Destruction of Chemical Weapons and the contributors thereto remained unchanged compared to the previous report.

Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria

15. In accordance with Council decision EC-M-48/DEC.1, the Director-General circulated a document providing a generic outline of the future activities of the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) (S/1255/2015*, dated 10 March 2015 and Add.1, dated 13 March 2015). The Director-General informed the Council at its Seventy-Eighth Session about his exchanges with the Syrian Arab Republic in the context of an FFM team's expected visit to Damascus, to follow up on the information provided by that State Party in December 2014 alleging a number of incidents involving the use of chlorine. Meanwhile, there have been other reported incidents of the use of chlorine, which the FFM is monitoring closely.

Conclusion

16. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the destruction of the nine remaining CWPFs and on making the special remote monitoring system operational in the five underground structures. The DAT and the FFM will also continue their work in the Syrian Arab Republic.